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MĪR DĀMĀD'S CONCEPT OF *ḤUDŪTH DAHRĪ*: A CONTRIBUTION TO THE STUDY OF GOD-WORLD RELATIONSHIP THEORIES IN SAFAVID IRAN

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SINCE the time of Naṣīr al-Dīn al-Ṭūsī (d. 1274), philosophical theology has prospered in Shīʿism, but its high water mark was reached in the Isfahan School of the Safavid period. Sayyid Muḥammad Bāqir Mīr Dāmād (d. 1040/1631–32) was a highly innovative philosopher-theologian of great prominence in Safavid Iran. His most celebrated, but equally controversial theory, concerns the "originatedness" of the world of intelligences and heavenly spheres, which had been regarded as eternal after Ibn Sīnā, and is called *ḥudūth dahrī*, or categorical or pure origination. Recently, several scholars have written about this theory, but since their treatments of it are either too brief[1] or, in certain cases, not very satisfactory,[2] I have chosen to elaborate on *ḥudūth dahrī* further; this paper is devoted to a study and analysis of the central issues in this notoriously difficult but fascinating doctrine and will attempt to explain its real meaning through a consideration of its historical setting as well.[3]

The theory of categorical origination was developed by Mīr Dāmād on the basis of certain statements made by Ibn Sīnā. In part Dāmād supported Ibn Sīnā, but because of the theory's obscurity and material inconsistency, he was forced to disagree and develop his own idea. Ibn Sīnā's statements concern two different but closely related issues, one related to the idea of origination (*ḥudūth*) and the other related to questions of time and eternity. Ibn Sīnā had, in general, distinguished three levels related to time and eternity: (1) the relationship of the unchanging to the unchanging (*thātit*) is in the realm of eternity; (2) the relationship of the changing to the changing is in time; (3) and the relationship of the unchanging to the changing, which is in *dahr* or perpetuity.[4] On this last category, Ibn Sīnā's statements oscillate: he often speaks as though it is a third distinct category and says, "it is with time [but not time],"[5] (al-Suhrawardī was to say later that "it is on the horizon of time"),[6] and, very often, "it comprehends or surrounds (*muḥīṭ*) time even as it itself is comprehended by eternity"; it causes time as it is itself caused by eternity.[7] But then we are also told, "the relationship of that which is 'with' time but not in time [to that which is in time] is perpetuity (*dahr*), while the relationship

[1] T. Izutsu's introduction (English) to Mīr Dāmād's *Kitāb al-Qabasāt*, ed. M. Muhaqqiq (Tehran, 1977); H. Corbin, in J. Āshtiyānī, *Muntakhabāt Az Āsār-i Ḥukamāy-i Irān*, vol. 1 (Tehran, 1972), p. 15 ff. (French section).

[2] Āshtiyānī, ibid., Persian text, p. 4 ff., compiler's footnotes to Dāmād's texts. As shown in the body of this paper, Āshtiyānī, to my mind, shows little understanding of Dāmād's thesis.

[3] Crucial for an adequate understanding of Dāmād are, in the first place, Ibn Sīnā and, secondarily, al-Suhrawardī, the latter particularly for his influence on Dāmād's theory of essence.

[4] Quoted in Mīr Dāmād's *al-Qabasāt*, p. 8, lines 18–19; p. 9, lines 7–8 and 18–19.

[5] Ibid., p. 7, line 12; p. 8, line 3.

[6] Ibid., p. 11, line 1.

[7] Ibid., p. 9, line 1.

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of that which is not in time to that which is not in time, *in so far as it is not in time*, is better called eternity (*sarmad*), since perpetuity (*dahr*) in itself is part of eternity and is called perpetuity [only] when compared to time."[8]

This last statement appears consistent with Ibn Sīnā's view that although perpetuity is between time and eternity, its postulation is really necessitated by the (causal) relationship of the eternal to the temporal and is hence also said to be "on the border" of time; for if eternals were only mutually related and not related to the temporals, there would be only eternity and no perpetuity. Its close connection with time is again emphasized in the following statement, which probably represents the closest determination of its nature by Ibn Sīnā: "that which falls outside this [temporal] category is not in time [but outside it]. Rather, when it is imagined to be "with" time and is considered in relation to it and its unchanging nature is found to coincide with and parallel with (*muṭābiq*) the unchanging nature of time itself and its contents [as a whole], this relationship and this aspect is termed "perpetuity (*dahr*); hence perpetuity surrounds time."[9] It thus appears that perpetuity is a kind of fixed or "frozen" time in which there is no temporal flow but otherwise is co-terminous or parallel with time. It should be pointed out that Aristotle had himself posited, in addition to the universal eternity of the highest heaven, individual eternities (*aiones*) for the individual eternal beings.[10] More important, Proclus, who, as usual, posited a middle term mediating between eternity and time and called it "perpetuity in time" says: ". . . perpetuity . . . is of two kinds, the one eternal, the other in time; the one a perpetual steadfastness, the other a perpetual becoming; the one having its existence concentrated in a simultaneous whole (i.e., that which is complete every moment), the other diffused and unfolded in temporal extension; the one entire in itself . . . ."[11]

Although Proclus expressly uses the term "perpetuity *in* time" and has described it as "temporal extension" which Ibn Sīnā denies,[12] there is not much doubt that he means what Ibn Sīnā calls "perpetuity *with* time," i.e., *dahr*. Proclus thinks of such entities as heavenly bodies and matter and probably time itself (i.e., as a whole) as contents of the realm of perpetuity; Ibn Sīnā also thinks of these as contents of *dahr*, although Ibn Sīnā usually talks of *relationships between* entities of different orders of existence as pertaining to eternity, i.e., perpetuity and time. Here, once more: "the relationship of the First, the Exalted (i.e., God) to the Active Intelligence or to the (Highest) Heaven is an unquantified relationship in terms of time: it is a relationship of the eternals, and the relationship of the eternals to the eternals is called "eternity (*sarmad*)" and "perpetuity (*dahr*)."[13] We note once again that the terms "eternity" and "perpetuity" are most probably used here synonymously.

Even more interesting and certainly much more important in Ibn Sīnā than the issue of time and eternity is the counterpart of this problem, viz. that of the emanational order of reality in terms of "contingency (*imkān*)" and "origination (*ḥudūth*)"; his statements on this crucial issue are equally puzzling. He distinguishes sharply between the Necessary Being—God—on the one hand, and all contingents, including the transcendental

[8] Ibid., p. 8, line 17; p. 9, line 1 (cf. lines 7–8).
[9] Ibid., p. 9, lines 22 ff.
[10] Reference to *De Caelo* in E. R. Dodds (edition with commentary) *Proclus' Elements of Theology* (Oxford, 1933), p. 229, lines 1–4.
[11] Ibid., p. 52, lines 30 ff.
[12] *Al-Qabāsāt*, p. 8, lines 3; p. 9, lines 7–8.
[13] Ibid., p. 8, lines 16–17.

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Intelligences on the other; and although he does not accept that the term "existence" has a different meaning in the two cases, he recurrently emphasizes that the existence of Intelligences was certainly of a different order and altogether of a different quality from that of God, since in the case of God, His existence is original, unique, and uncaused, while in contingents it is borrowed from and caused by God, and hence the two can never be the same.[14] In themselves, even Intelligences deserved non-existence and acquired existence only through God's bestowal; He is the"Grantor of existence (*wāhib al-wujūd*)." But, in view of the difficulties involved in the concept of temporal creation, Ibn Sīnā declares the Intelligences, the heavenly spheres, and the world as a whole to be only "essentially (*bi'l-dhāt*)," "posterior" to God, not temporally: thus, both God and the world are co-eternal, although the world is contingent and God Self-Necessary.

Further, in some of his statements, Ibn Sīnā even reduces this "essential" priority of non-being of contingents to their being (i.e., the "essential" priority of God's existence over that of contingents) to the status of being "mental (*'ind al-dhihn*)" rather than real: "that which is called *'ibdā'* (eternal emanation)' by the philosophers is to turn something into a being after it was nothing, since the effect *in itself* (i.e., non-being) is prior 'mentally (*'ind al-dhihn*, logically)' in essence rather than in time to that which comes to it from something else (i.e., its cause)."[15] The concept of a "logical" priority as opposed to a real one turns it into a more or less "nominal" priority, and we move away, under the impact of Aristotelian-neo-platonic philosophical considerations, from Ibn Sīnā's *real* distinction between the Necessary and the Contigent (which, by the way, he had originally formulated through a religious motivation). As we have seen above, Ibn Sīnā puts all "eternals," whether God or non-God, in the realm of eternity (*sarmad*); the difference between the two threatens to evaporate.

An important development took place after Ibn Sīnā under the influence of "essentialism," i.e., the doctrine of the priority of essence over existence, which began with al-Suhrawardī (d. 1191), and this strongly influenced Mīr Dāmād's thought. In Ibn Sīnā's use of the terms "in itself" and "essentially or logically (*bi'l dhāt*)," there is no obvious reference to any status of the "pure essence"; and there is little doubt that by these terms, Ibn Sīnā simply means that something "taken by itself," i.e., "without reference to a cause," does not exist—not in the sense of its "essential or logical status (*bi'l-martaba al-'aqliya*)" as Mīr Dāmād and other thinkers like him came to formulate this doctrine, which they subsequently opposed to "the field of real or external existence (*fī matn al-a'yān, fī ḥāqq al-khārij*, etc.)."

I have dwelt a great deal on Ibn Sīnā because, in my view, it is simply not possible to understand, let alone appreciate and evaluate, Mīr Dāmād's doctrine of perpetual origination (*ḥudūth dahrī*) without some background. Dāmād's whole effort is concentrated on proving that the "essential origination (*ḥudūth dhātī*)" of Ibn Sīnā which, as we have seen above, threatened to evaporate into a purely nominal distinction between God and the Intelligences, did involve a "*real* origination (*ḥudūth fī matn al-a'yān*)" at the level of *dahr* or perpetuity, a concept which Professor Corbin has so excellently rendered as "événement eternel" (to which Proclus's *ἀιδιότης γινομένη* is a close approximation). The question at issue is whether or not the origination of the

[14] See my *The Philosophy of Mullā Ṣadrā* (Albany, New York, 1975), p. 112, last paragraph.

[15] *Al-Qabāsāt*, p. 86, lines 6 ff.

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Intelligences and heavenly spheres, etc. from God, although perhaps not involving a temporal gap, does not involve, nevertheless, a *real* origination, an ontological hiatus or rupture of being as opposed to a mere "mental" one as the essentialist commentators of Ibn Sīnā had come to believe.

In doing so, Mīr Dāmād radically distinguishes *dahr* from *sarmad* or pure eternity, i.e., the level at which God exists. The level of *sarmad*, because it is totally different from *dahr*, let alone time, is beyond any relationship with it, so that it is not even proper to describe God as "being beyond (*mutaqaddis ʿan*)" *dahr* or time, since the term "beyond" does imply some relationship to that from which He is beyond. As I shall illustrate, God is, in fact, so utterly unique that it is inconceivable that the world—including both the Intelligences and things material—can exist at His level of existence. We must therefore posit the entirety of the world at a different level of being, which is the level of *dahr*. As for the world of time, it is only made possible by the phenomenon of movement which gives rise to time; but the fact of movement is, as we shall presently see, extraneous not only to our argument but also to the nature of being itself, since all temporal beings really exist in *dahr*.

To establish *dahr*, then, our philosopher follows two routes: one descending from the pure eternity of God (*sarmad*) and the other ascending from the world of temporal extension. I shall take up the latter first if only because it is the more straightforward of the two. I have just stated that for *origination* (*ḥudūth*), the extension of time is not necessary. Dāmād quotes from Abu'l-Barakāt al-Baghdādī the philosophers' argument[16] against the theologians which asks how much time was needed before the creation of the world—if, indeed, the world was created in time. Under examination, the interlocutor is forced to admit finally that no quantity of time is necessary for creation and that *ḥudūth* or origination is essentially a non-temporal event. It follows from this that time or temporal extension is *irrelevant* to origination as such. But if you remove the extension of time from the world, what remains is *dahr*, where the order of events remains without past, present, and future. We should note that with this argument, Dāmād has made a real departure from Ibn Sīnā for whom normally *ḥudūth* means *origination in time*. Furthermore, he feels it is not *ḥudūth* but simply *imkān* or contingency which does not require time and thus essentially equates the two.

Dahr, then, means the world of "pure time" where origination or "eventuality" remains without the extension of time. Dāmād further refers to an argument used by Ibn Sīnā and others according to which the *ḥudūth* of a thing requires that it be temporally preceded by non-existence, and hence this non-existence becomes, in an indirect way, a cause of a thing's coming into being.[17] Further, *ḥudūth* and temporal non-being are regarded as "contradictories," since existence and non-exitsence seem contradictory; hence it is held that the non-existence of a thing has to be "removed" if its existence is to be realized. Dāmād rejects part of this argument and accepts part of it in such a way that this finally becomes a proof for his doctrine of *dahr*. He accepts that existence and non-existence are contradictories and that, therefore, non-existence has to be "removed" when existence is realized. He rejects, however, the application of this argument to temporal origination: in time, the non-existence of a thing is temporally antecedent to its existence; hence its non-existence and existence cannot be contradictories since in

[16] Ibid., p. 6, lines 2 ff.

[17] Ibid., p. 224, lines 16 ff.

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order to be contradictories, both the existence and non-existence have to be simultaneous—just as A's existence in his home is not contradictory to his non-existence in the market, since in order for A's existence and non-existence to be contradictory, these states must occur *in the same place*.[18] There is no doubt, however, that both the existence and non-existence of a thing are contradictory; if their "contradictoriness" cannot be established at the level of temporal existence, then it must be establshed at the level of pure time, which, as I have shown, contains the order of real being (as opposed to the purely logical one) without temporal extension. This is *dahr*. In *dahr*, it is correct to say that the non-existence of a thing is antecedent, or prior to, or precedes its existence, but this antecedence, or priority, or precedence is not *temporal* but exists in pure time. If one speaks in terms of time, then they are "together" in *dahr*. Nor is precedence or priority purely logical so that the origination in *dahr* might be construed as "essential origination" (*ḥudūth dhātī*) which has been spoken of earlier and *against* whose implications of a purely logical priority of non-being over being Dāmād formulated his doctrine of *real* origination in *dahr*, a theory implying a rupture or dislocation of being between God and the world. Indeed, the theory of *ḥudūth dhātī* or the logical priority of the non-being of a thing over its being—which has been held to be purely "mental"—involves no contradiction (just as the temporal antecedence of non-being to being has also been shown to involve no contradiction), since the non-being in this case is in respect of the thing taken in itself, as divorced from its cause, while the positive being is in respect of the cause of the thing. Since these two respects of being and non-being are different, there is no contradiction, for, as stated above, in order to be contradictory, all aspects of a thing have to be the same. This also shows that the name "logical" often used in this context is a misnomer, since logical contradiction is absolute and does not have reference to different aspects.

Jalāl al-Dīn Āshtiyānī rejects Dāmād's theory of *ḥudūth dahrī* as spurious and asserts that whatever Dāmād wanted to achieve through his concept of *ḥudūth dahrī* can be explained through *ḥudūth dhātī*.[19] Yet, Ashtiyānī firmly holds to the traditional description of *ḥudūth dhātī* as being purely logical (*bi'l-martaḥa al-ʿaqliya*) or mental (*ʿind al-dhihn*). Dāmād, while prima facie accepting this definition of *ḥudūth dhātī* found it justifiably insufficient to prove this *ḥudūth* and, in his search for real *ḥudūth*, came to formulate his doctrine of *ḥudūth dahrī*, since temporal origination has been shown to be a meaningless concept, time iteslf being irrelevant to origination. Whether one accepts Dāmād's theory of *dahr* or not, one must accept that the *traditional* view of *ḥudūth dhātī*, which is nothing but *imkān* or pure contingency, cannot prove *real ḥudūth*, which means a *real*, though non-temporal, precedence of non-being of a thing over its being and not just a mental or logical precedence. Alternatively, one may, of course, deny all *real ḥudūth* and any existential hiatus between God and the world and regard the world and all its contents (including temporal contents) as essentially of the same status as God or His attributes, which Āshtiyānī is obviously not willing to do, recognizing origination to be restricted to two kinds—mental or temporal.[20] Āshtiyānī also says that because

[18] Ibid., p. 225, lines 9–15; also p. 17, line 11–p. 18, line 2.

[19] Āshtiyānī, *Muntakhabāt*, p. 8, n. 2; p. 9, n. 1; p. 11, line 17–p. 12, line 13; p. 13, line 8–p. 15, line 15, particularly last par. in this reference, where Āshtiyānī admits "a certain origination" (line 8) of the world from God but takes Dāmād's *ḥudūth dahrī* to imply temporal origination (*pas az ḥudūthi-i zamāni dast bāyad kashīd*!); p. 16, line 14, where *ḥudūth dhātī* is construed only as that of the "conceptual level (*bi'l martaba al-ʿaqlīya*)."

[20] See the last two references in n. 19 above.

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Dāmād's theory of *ḥudūth dahrī* was untenable, his pupil, Mullā Ṣadrā did not adopt it[21] and formulated a correct theory of the real origination of the world. (In my work *The Philosophy of Mullā Ṣadrā*, I have demonstrated the great sophistication and originality of Mullā Ṣadrā's philosophical system and have also pointed out and discussed the inadequacy of his doctrine of the origination of the world.)[22]

Dāmād, in fact, holds that it is not in the temporal nature of events but rather in their nature as contingents that the true source of real *ḥudūth* is to be sought, thus departing from the traditional view of contingency:

It is a clearly ascertained fact that the contingency of potentiality (which exists in material things only as distinguished from pure contingency which characterizes non-material beings), as such, is a necessary accompaniment of movements, while the simple requirement of time is that for which a potentiality exists is not actualized while that potentiality lasts. The precedence of potentiality over that of which it is the potentiality, accordingly, is a temporally quantified precedence. Therefore, this alone does not render it impossible that the potentiality, the matter that bears this potentiality, and that for which this potentiality exists, all may exist together in *dahr* (without any priority or posteriority, since there is no quantified time in *dahr*) in a *dahrī* co-existence and that the antecedence of matter and its potentiality over that of which it is potentiality be a purely natural antecedence (*bi'l ṭab'*, like the antecedence of the number two over three, for example)[23] and not a real *dahrī* antecedence (like that of cause over its effect, for example).

Hence, the contingency of potentiality, as such, in relation to that for whose actual existence it is a potentiality, is neither antagonistic to its *dahrī* origination (since they can co-exist there), nor required by it. Therefore, we say that but for the fact that the nature of essential contingency itself (*al imkān al-dhātī*, as distinguished from contingency of potentiality, *al imkān al-isti'dādī*) forbids the eternity of the existence (of a contingent) in *dahr*, [the being of] that for which the potentiality exists would be characterized only by a mental or logical origination, in view of its pure contingency, while (at the level of time) it would be characterized by temporal origination in view of its contingency of potentiality.

In that case, something which comes into being through the contingency of potentiality (i.e., has material existence in time) would combine in itself temporal origination with a *dahrī* eternity. Nobody, however, will plunge into permitting this kind of view, except one who takes leave of his rational constitution and gives up his natural balance.[24]

This kind of crucial passage makes it abundantly clear that each of the three levels of existence imposes its own characteristic logic on the contents that exist there, although there is a causational connection among these levels. First of all, there is the level of *sarmad*, or eternity, where only God exists; and there also "are" at this level essences of all things. Dāmād, who is in the tradition of essentialism (as opposed to his pupil Mullā Ṣadrā who is an existentialist with a vengeance) believes that prior to their positive, real existence, essences exist with God and are caused by Him. These do not possess real existence but simply "are there" with God just as our thoughts are with us, having no real separate existence of their own. But these essences represent a kind of logical posteriority to God's being, if not a real, separate posteriority, because they pre-

[21] Ibid., p. 15, lines 13–15.

[22] See my *Philosophy of Mulla Ṣadrā*, p. 12, lines 4 ff.; p. 77, last par.; p. 89, lines 8 ff.

[23] For "natural priority or priority in natural order (*taqaddum bi'l ṭab'*)" see nn. 32 and 33 below.

[24] *Al-Qabasāt*, p. 226, lines 3–14.

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suppose God's being while God's being does not presuppose theirs: they depend upon God, not God upon them. This is exactly what Dāmād means by *taqaddum dhātī* (essential or logical priority) and *ḥudūth dhātī* (essential or logical origination). Since, however, these essences co-exist with God as necessary concomitants of His being, they cannot be called "really originated" but only technically originated, since there is no real, existential rupture between them and between God's being—indeed, they do not "exist" separate from God. Therefore, when one says, for example, that "man is originated," one can mean two things: either that the essence of man is originated, which simply means that this essence, like others, depends upon God. Since essences are known through reason, they are said to be only "at the level of reason (*bi'l-martaba al-ʿaqlīya*)" as opposed to the level of real, positive being. Essences, therefore, are doubly non-existent in a positive sense, since, first, they are only "with God" as necessary and posterior consequences of His being and having no existence of their own; secondly, their being is known only through reason, i.e., they exist for reason only and have no real and positive being.

Secondly, by my propostion "man is originated," I mean the real, positive existence of man which is separate from God's own existence and is caused by it in a real sense and do not mean the essence of man which is only a concomitant of God's existence and not separate from Him. This second sense of origination is the real meaning of origination; for where essences are merely contingent (*mumkin*), positive "existents" are truly originated (*ḥādith*). They imply a genuine rupture from and discontinuity with (*infikāk*) the peculiar being of God, since they are not just necessary concomitants of God's being, having no positive and separate existence of their own like heat in relation to fire, but possessing positive being of their own like Intelligences, heavenly spheres, men, etc. These positive existents are truly caused by God and are His effects, not just His concomitants such as pure essences. Since these positive existents exist in themselves, are truly caused by God, and are really originated, they cannot exist at the level of God's eternity (*sarmad*); but the discontinuity of their being with God's requires that they exist at a lower level of being which Dāmād calls *dahr*.[25]

The realm of *dahr*, then, is real but pure origination: real because it is not just nominal origination like the origination of essences from God and pure because this occurs in pure time or perpetuity without the extension or quantification of time. The reason for the existence of *dahr* is that positive existence ("in the heart of reality [*fī kabid al-aʿyān*]" and "the verity of external existence [*fī ḥaqq al-wāqiʿ*]") as opposed to a mere relationship of dependence upon or concomitance to God, requires a real movement in the nature of existence, a fundamental ontological event which brings the being of the world from the unadulterated innocence of the essences into temporally eternal existence. This "twist" in the nature of existence involves a rupture with God's eternal being and is characterized by *ḥudūth* or real origination, where existence is really preceded by non-existence. This can occur only in *dahr* and not in *sarmad*. It is, however, true that on occasion Dāmād expresses this argument the other way around and says that it is of the nature of essential contingency (*al-imkān al-dhātī*) that it *expresses itself* as *dahrī* origination, when it comes down to the level of *dahr* (see par. 2 of the quotation given above, p. 144). This, prima facie, means that when essential contingency comes

[25] See also ibid., p. 87, line 12–p. 88, line 9.

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down into *dahr*, it translates itself into *ḥudūth;* but the fact is that when an essence is translated into external existence, it can no longer remain in the state of pure contingency or *imkān* but must develop a rupture (*infikāk*) with God's being—such that its existence must be preceded by not just mental and nominal, but real and categorical non-existence (*al-ʾadam al-ṣurāḥ al-bātt*). The status of being of this kind of *ḥudūth*, or origination, is *dahr* where *all* real entities except God have their existence.

Ibn Sīnā, as I stated at the beginning of this paper, had spoken of *dahr* besides eternity or *sarmad* and *zamān* or time, but as I have indicated, his statements oscillated greatly between making *dahr* a part of *sarmad*, on the one hand, and making it something between *sarmad* and *zamān* on the other. There is no doubt that on the whole, Ibn Sīnā makes only two categories of all being, viz., eternals and temporals and puts in the first category, in addition to God, not only the Universal Intelligences, but at least sometimes the highest sphere also, because the sphere is, in one aspect, eternal and in another aspect (i.e., in so far as it moves) non-eternal; he states categorically that the relationship of the eternal to the eternal is *sarmad* while the relationship of the eternal to time is *dahr*, and *dahr* itself is a type or or a part of *sarmad*.[26] Although he emphasizes the gulf between the self-necessary God and the contingent world, particularly the Intelligences, nevertheless, he also describes the dependence relationship of the latter to the former as being "mental" and "logical" only. This, coupled with the fact that he could talk only in terms of either eternals or temporals, leaves the firm impression that for Ibn Sīnā the difference between God and the Intelligences, in particular, was only logical or nominal.

It is against this background that the meaning of Dāmād's doctrine of *dahr* is thrown into full relief. It was undoubtedly also facilitated by the fact that in the post-Ibn Sīnā philosophical development of essentialism, Ibn Sīnā's term *biʾl dhāt* (which means "by itself" or "in itself") came to be taken to mean "by its essence"; and when one asserted the priority of essence over existence, one came to regard essences after Ibn ʿArabī as God's concomitances constituted by a relationship of dependence upon Him and having no separate being from Him. This being the case, it was not difficult for Mīr Dāmād to show that while essences which have no positive existence are only "essentially contingent (*ḥādith* or *mumkin biʾl dhāt*)," when these are translated into positive and real existents, these existents develop real *ḥudūth* or categorical origination in *dahr* where they are preceded by categorical non-existence; otherwise there will be no difference between their positive existence and the non-existent status of essences. Later, when Mullā Ṣadrā rejects the priority of essences over existents and asserts the opposite, he lifts the Intelligences from the realm of *ḥudūth* or origination and makes them part of Godhead, as His Attributes, a fact which is by no means accidental but is dictated by Ṣadrā's position, just as Dāmād's positing them in *dahr*, the realm of pure origination, is also not an accident but is dictated by Ibn Sīnā's doctrine and its subsequent development by the essentialist philosophers.

We have now proven *dahr* both by descending from God's eternity and the world of essences, on the one hand, and ascending from the realm of time on the other. The central point of these considerations is that it is neither the purely conceptual origination of the essence, nor the quantified flow of time that gives us the true nature of real

[26] Ibid., p. 9, lines 7–8; p. 8, line 17.

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origination which is a pure event occurring in pure time and is preceded by a pure, i.e., non-temporal, non-existence. There are two more proofs among several advanced by Dāmād worthy of mention, because, in my view, they are particularly effective support of his thesis—one constructed on the basis of Ibn Sīnā's own statements and the other through an analysis of conceptual priority (*taqaddum bi'l dhāt*) and its application to the being of God.

Although, as stated above, the over-all impression left by Ibn Sīnā is that beings are either eternal or temporal (among the eternals, God is self-necessary while others are contingent in themselves but necessary through God), he nevertheless states that some eternals are not preceded by actual non-being at all while others are so preceded even though they are non-temporal. The first catergoy consists of the transcendental Intelligences, while the second apparently includes the heavenly spheres along with their souls. Here are Ibn Sīnā's words:

> The originated beings which are non-temporal are either those whose existence comes after an absolute non-existence or those whose existence comes after a non-absolute non-existence —indeed, in the latter it comes after a particular non-existence in relation to an existent matter (i.e., wherein it is first non-existent and then becomes existent, but without involving time). . . . Now, if its existence supervenes upon absolute non-existence, its emanation from its cause is called "simple origination (*ibdāᶜ*)," this being the most excellent manner of bestowing existence since, in this case, non-existence has been simply prevented (and not just removed) and existence has been imposed. If non-existence could have actually found its way there, preceding existence, then the origination of such a thing would have been impossible except through matter.[27]

Dāmād explains that "absolute non-existence" here means that which can co-exist with existence—the one being from the side of a thing's essence and the other being from God —while "particular or restricted non-existence" means when it cannot co-exist with existence but must be replaced by it.[28]

Let us remember that both these types of origination belong to the category of "conceptual prioity (*taqaddum bi'l martaba al-ᶜaqlīya*)" and "essential origination (*taqaddum bi'l dhāt*)" both are eternal, and yet the one is not preceded by any actual non-existence while the other is. It is this second which has an existential rupture with God's being, which leads Dāmād to his postulate of *dahr* and which Ibn Sīnā also, to all appearances, puts at the level of *dahr*—since it cannot belong to the realm of time, being supra-temporal, on the one hand, and yet cannot belong to the realm of simple eternity because its existence is preceded by actual non-existence. The doctrnie of *dahr* is thus available to Dāmād ready-made, indeed—but for one important difficulty: apparently Ibn Sīnā puts in *dahr* only the heavenly spheres and time itself as a whole, while he puts the transcendental Intelligences in the realm of simple or pure eternity. Dāmād must interpret and reconstruct Ibn Sīnā's doctrine in such a way that all "essential contingency (*al-imkān al-dhāti*)" entails a real dislocation of being with God and is preceded by actual non-existence, whether heavenly spheres or Intelligences.

We start with the premise that the highest sphere with its soul is originated in *dahr* and is preceded by non-existence, as Ibn Sīnā himself admits. But coeval with the highest

[27] Ibid., quotation p. 3, line 12–p. 4, line 2.

[28] Ibid., p. 4, lines 3–4; for a criticism of Ibn Sīnā and Al-Fārābī, see ibid., p. 77, lines 12 ff.

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sphere is also the second Intelligence, since both are caused by the first Intelligence which causes them in accordance with its different aspects (*is*ᶜ*tibārāt*), viz., its contingency by itself and necessity by the other, viz., God. Further, these different aspects of the first Intelligence itself must be caused by different aspects of God Himself, since one simple cause can produce only one effect, according to the philosophers' principle. In fact, every cause, in so far as it produces an effect, is, as such, simple; and a cause can be said to produce different effects only thanks to its different aspects, each of which is a simple cause. God, therefore, although He is one single being in Himself, must be regarded as having different aspects in order to cause the different aspects of the first Intelligence. When the first Intelligence causes the highest sphere on the one hand and the second Intelligence on the other, this is also because although it is one single being, it has different aspects, and each of the aspects is a cause. This means that the direct multiple effects of a single being are mutually interdependent (*mutalāzim*) thanks to the different aspects of that single being. If, however, the highest sphere and the second Intelligence mutually entail each other and the highest sphere is admitted to be preceded by actual but non-temporal non-existence, then surely, the second Intelligence must also be admitted to be preceded by actual non-existence—otherwise, they cannot entail each other. Further, if the second Intelligence is preceded by actual non-existence and not just by conceptual non-existence, then so must be the case with the first Intelligence itself. There is no intrinsic difference not only among Intelligences but between eternal Intelligences on the one hand, and eternal spheres on the other: all eternals must be originated at the level of *dahr* together. It would be illogical to say that certain eternals actually originate before others in *dahr* even though, of course, at the level of conceptual or essential origination, some have priority over the others. In their actual origination, eternals encounter no impedence which is the fate of only those beings which suffer from not only essential contingency (*al-imkān al-dhātī*), but also the contingency of potentiality (*al-imkān al-isti*ᶜ*dādī*), since potentiality needs actualization and hence requires time.[29]

This proves, for Dāmād, that the basis (*milāk*) of existence in *dahr*, i.e., to be originated after a temporally non-quantified non-existence, is essential or conceptual origination itself; and since everything other than God is characterized by this kind of origination, thanks to its dual nature which is to be a composite of essence and existence, everything other than God must exist in *dahr* and nothing can exist in *sarmad*, where God alone exists. This is certainly a radical modification of Ibn Sīnā's doctrine, but it is a modification made more possible by Ibn Sīnā's own doctrine of emanation where God is absolutely simple, where from one simple being only one simple being can flow, where the first emanent, the first Intelligence, is not quite simple and where, finally, both the Intelligences and the spheres are eternal and the latter are preceded by an actual non-existence, not just a conceptual one which characterizes only the Intelligences.

There is no doubt, therefore, that, although Dāmād has drastically changed this particular theory of Ibn Sīnā's, the overall effect of Dāmād's concept of *dahrī* origination is, to my mind, quite in line with Ibn Sīnā's general intent. The whole idea behind the latter's concept of contingency is to radically demarcate God, the self-necessary Existent, from all the rest of existents, including the Intelligences. He has insisted that original being and borrowed being can never be the same in nature, even though the term "being"

[29] Ibid., p. 220, line 11–p. 222, line 6.

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is not applied to both with fundamental equivocality.[30] This distinction also lies at the root of his theory of essence and existence. But since Ibn Sīnā, generally speaking, like all the preceding philosophers, could divide reality only into two categories, the eternal and the temporal and he could not put the Intelligences into the temporal realm, he put them in the realm of eternity or *sarmad*, the level where God is. His talk of *dahr* and his statement that heavenly spheres are in *dahr* since they are preceded by an actual but non-temporal non-existence, appears both as isolated and oscillating, since no substantive consequences are drawn from this for a third level of existence in pure time or perpetuity. Add to this what we have said above, viz., that he also described contingency in purely nominal or logical terms (*ʿind al-dhihn*), without any existential counterpart, and the Intelligences at least threaten to become identical with God, the source of both their essence and existence! It is this which Dāmād's *dahr* purports to remedy by proving a real, existential hiatus between God and the world including the transcendental Intelligences. We shall now turn to Dāmād's argument constructed on the basis of his threefold analysis of conceptual or logical priority and the existential contingency of the world resulting from it.

I have thus far implied that the term "conceptual priority (*al-taqaddum biʾl martaba al ʿaqlīya*)" was the equivalent of the expression "priority by essence." Strictly speaking, this is not correct since conceptual priority is only one of the three forms of essential priority (*raqaddum biʾl dhāt*), viz., priority by nature, by existence, and by concept, which are all distinguishable within essential priority. It is true that al-Suhrawardī,[31] in view of the fact that existence is a mental abstraction to which nothing corresponds in reality, wanted to restrict conceptual or logical priority to priority by essence; but even though existence is a mental abstraction, it is a fact of our experience and as such cannot be ignored. Priority by nature (*biʾl-tabʿ*) and by existence or, rather, causation (*biʾl-ʿillīya*), therefore, must be acknowledged.[32] Priority by essence means that a certain essence is constituted logically before another; for example, the essence of animal is constituted before that of man or the essence of a line is constituted before that of a triangle. The same examples also illustrate[33] priority by nature or natural position, with a difference. The difference is that an essence, as such, exists only in the conceptual realm and has no reference to real, existential reality unless it is caused to exist. When it does exist in the external world, it is accompanied and surrounded by certain extrinsic attachments, but its pure being can be studied and disentangled from them and referred to its purely logical being.[34] Priority by nature, on the other hand, although it is still in the conceptual realm, carries within it reference to existence; for example, the existence of a triangle presupposes the existence of a line—even though, of course, lines may exist in actual reality simultaneously with, and not before, a triangle.

Finally, priority of a cause is universally assumed over its effect. The fact is that whereas an effect does not exist at the level of its cause, a cause does exist at the level of its effect. This phenomenon of simultaneity-cum-priority may also be found in the case of priority by essence and priority by nature; for example a line and a triangle may exist simultaneously, but a line can also exist separately from a triangle, whereas in the case of cause-effect, this separation is impossible. Causal priority also shares with

[30] See reference in n. 14 above.
[31] *Al-Qabasāt*, p. 67, lines 1 ff.
[32] Ibid.
[33] Ibid., p. 63, line 10–p. 64, line 21.
[34] Ibid., p. 47, line 15–p. 49, line 3.

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natural priority the characteristic that it also has reference to existence—indeed, it has reference to *necessary* existence since the complete efficient cause necessarily produces its effect—although, of course, the priority that we are discussing here is only a logical priority.[35]

I have been able to speak of these three priorities at the conceptual level because in the contingent realm there is a duality between concept and reality, between logical being and existential being. When we come to God, however, we find that His actual existence is His essence and that in this case there is no duality of nature whatsoever but pure existential unity.[36] This being the case, the proposition that the world is conceptually or essentially posterior to God necessarily entails or is, indeed, identical with the further proposition that the world is existentially posterior to God. It is this existential, not just conceptual or logical posteriority (*ta'akhkhur-dhāti*) of the world vis à vis God that means that *in its actual existence*, not just in its concept, the world suffers from a rupture with God's being and that the being of the world must necessarily be preceded by a real, though non-temporal non-existence. It, then, must exist with its contents in *dahr* and not in pure eternity:

> The priority of the being of the cause, particularly of the efficient cause, over the being of its effect, in a logical sense, i.e., at the conceptual level, is among those truths that come naturally to rationally healthy minds and all the philosophers and thinkers are agreed upon it. The effect does not exist at the level of the being of the efficient cause, since existence reaches the effect from the cause, but both exist simultaneously at the level of the effect—in existential reality, not just at the level of concept.
>
> The macrocosm, then, with all the parts of its total system, is absolutely posterior to the level of God's being, the Creator, the Maker, exalted be His name. And when it has become clear that the existence categorically rooted in eternal reality is identically the essence of the Creator, then, *in His case*, the conceptual level and the level of existential reality coalesce fully, and, in all respects, His real, eternal existence is identically the same as His conceptual being. For the Divine Realm, being categorically rooted in existential reality is the exact analogue of the (conceptual) essence of man or of Intelligence in the contingent world, for example.
>
> Hence the posteriority of the world vis à vis the *conceptual* level of God's being, which is the posteriority of an effect (vis à vis its cause) is exactly the kind of posteriority that involves a rupture or a hiatus (*infikāk*) in relation to His *truly existential being*, while God's precedence as cause over the world at the *conceptual* level is identically the precedence of His unique existence in external reality. [What has just been said about causal priority and posteriority] also applies to priority and posteriority by essence—indeed to the entirety of essential priorities and posteriorities (including priority and posteriority by nature).
>
> The conceptual posteriority [of the world]—whether or not it is caused by essence or by natural order—in all its forms is reducible to existential hiatus in *dahr*, while God's conceptual priority in all its forms—causal, by essence or by natural order—is reducible to His unique existence in eternity (*sarmad*). No analogy can be correctly drawn between the Divine relationship with the world and the relationship of the sun to its rays . . . as so many wag their tongues and gibber; for you already know that, in the case of the sun, its conceptual being is not identical with its real, existential being, as is the case with the Divine Realm. So is the case with the analogy of the movement of the hand wearing a ring.[37]

[35] See n. 33 above, and ibid., p. 68, lines 18 ff.
[36] Ibid., p. 49, line 5–p. 51, line 9.
[37] Ibid., p. 75, line 4–p. 76, line 6.

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Although Dāmād has shown a special preoccupation with this realm of pure time and has brought some palpably cogent considerations to prove the categorical, i.e., extra-essential and non-temporal origination of the world in *dahr*, he seems to have spent little time on going deeper into the nature of *dahr* itself and working out its implications, for example, for the problems of causation, movement, will, immortality, etc. It appears that, although his philosophical impulse and acuteness are certainly genuine and are clearly brought out in his refinement of many philosophical concepts, his overriding conscious aim is theological; and, once he has proved the *dahrī* origination of the world and set it categorically at a different level of being from God, he does not pursue the question of the nature of *dahr* as such much further. In his various proofs for the establishment of *dahr*, he seeks to prove, for example, that Intelligences and heavenly spheres must really exist in *dahr*, that the real existence of temporal things is also in *dahr*, that the true being of general ideas (*al-ṭabā'iʿ al-mursala*) is also in *dahr*, and, finally, that time itself exists in *dahr*.

However, all these constitute many arguments *to prove* the existence of *dahr*, rather than a systematic enquiry into the nature of *dahr* and its contents. For this reason, even though several of his proofs seem to me completely valid, I think that because of his lack of attempt to systematically discuss the nature and implications of *dahr*, this rare and, indeed, original philosophical insight has appeared to many as something unintelligible and perhaps even artificial. My purpose in this paper has been to show that Dāmād's theory of *dahr* is in itself highly intelligible and philosophically meaningful and original, quite apart from the fact that it was not systematically worked out in terms of its implications for the great problems of philosophy. There Dāmād differs from Mullā Ṣadrā, who worked out in full the implications of his theory of the primordiality and systematic ambiguity of existence. This does not, however, mean that Dāmād's own philosophy is exhausted by his elliptically formulated doctrine of *dahr;* for, after examining his *al-Qabasāt*, I am convinced that there are many additional profound ideas in his philosophical system, all of which merit further investigation.

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